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Clara Bow on Radio By James Peyton



Truman was president. The war was over. (By the way, Oct. 5, 1947 was the first televised presidential speech) A few years later, Americans were sitting by the radio listening to a game show on NBC. Ralph Edwards was the host. People seemed to win prizes no matter what they did on this show, and there were many "gimmicks". Sometimes the audience had to guess the identity of a celebrity. In one episode, there was a "walking man", who turned out to be Jack Benny. On January 25, 1947, *Truth or Consequences* was broadcast on several stations around the country. Two live recordings were given, one for the east coast, and one for the west. Mrs. William McCormick of Lock

Haven, Pennsylvania guessed the right answer to the latest mystery guest. In the Mrs. Hush contest, the audience had to guess the identity of a female celebrity. That celebrity was Clara Bow.

How many Clara Bow fans are there? It seems that fans are few, because so many years later, she is relatively unknown and her films under-represented on DVD. Chaplin, Lloyd, and Keaton have at least one official box set. At the time of this writing, Clara Bow's "IT" is on Netflix, and there are some obscure retailers selling some of her movies on DVD. Much of her work is lost, unless perhaps some more of it can still be found and preserved. One of her films, *Maytime*, was recently found in the New Zealand treasure



Ralph Edwards

trove of silent films found in 2009. The color segment from *Red Hair* has been found, but as far as I know, not the whole film. Sadly, it seems many do not know that "Betty Boop" was partially based on Clara Bow, or that she was the "Marilyn Monroe"

of her day. You still see high school students wearing Michael Jackson, Marilyn Monroe, and even James Dean shirts, but no Bow.

What inspires Clara Bow fans today? It seems that people either dislike her or are very infatuated with her, rather than just having a casual interest. What is it about Clara and her movies that inspire obsession? I believe there is something elemental about her, something special and human that comes across on the screen. People can relate to tragedy, people can relate to someone who is brutally honest about life. There is something of actual life captured in film that transcends that ancient celluloid, something that seems more transcendent than any other actress. Something of a basic humanity, a real life, that stands out amongst the vague individuals blurred by conformity and expected stereotypes we find in films. There is something that seems alive and modern contrasted to the other stoic and black and white actors, something that seems alive, compared to the everything else in the archaic flickering, until you actually see the film decay before your eyes, reminding you that this really is just a clump of nitrate from the 1920s. Although I assume most of her fans are male, it seems as though both men and women are fascinated by her. What is this elemental quality about her, that inspires obsession?



Perhaps the large brown eyes, the heart shaped lips, the animated expressions and smiles, the flapper style, and the bold attitude make her an attraction for men and women alike.

My own compulsion started after watching *Wings* for the first time. I have been watching silent films since I was a teenager, and I had never seen a Clara Bow film. In fact I had seen over one hundred silent films, and depending if you count short films, probably close to 200. I think when you first see her on screen, there is a brief moment of awe. Kind of like someone who walks up to a diorama of model trains. You either see the miniature trains, people, and buildings and go, "Wow!" or you're not interested. You either get it right away or you don't. I even discovered that we have a strange thing in common, which made me relate to her story even more. Both of our mothers chased us with knives. When her mother came after her with a knife, according to what book you read, she

chased poor Clara into a closet or the bathroom. My mother chased me with two butcher knives into the bathroom. In her story, she supposedly stayed in the closet till her grandma came or in the bathroom till her father came. In my story, I opened the door suddenly, splashing her in the eye with hot water from the sink, and still slept there the whole night and not leaving till the next morning. In Clara's story, which was far worse than mine, her mother's intentions being a lot more serious, she remembered the event vividly, and Clara hardly slept the rest of her life.



I read that after she won the beauty contest, and got on a train for Hollywood to become a movie star, she incessantly played her favorite and only record on a portable player, *The Parade of The Wooden Soldiers*. I wanted to hear that song, and I wanted to like it because she liked it. Another odd thing was that I guess I did like it, and somehow became attached to the

1923 song. I feel a comforting feeling whenever I hear the song. Often after running 3 miles, I walk around in circles for the cool down period, "marching" while listening to this song. It reminds me that the past really existed, of sort of "our place in the universe", and that somehow, beyond a hundred years of time, even beyond death, you can share a common experience with someone and feel connected,... perhaps by what you have in common or can relate to. The only other time I remember having an aberrant behavior like this was when my blind friend Joybubbles died. It was around Christmas, I picked up a Rolling Stone Magazine from a table and read that my friend had died. For some unknown reason, I listened to the ticking of a fob watch all night in bed. That never happened before or since. I used to listen to him on the radio for hours. He had his own homemade radio program, *Stories and Stuff* out of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

When I saw *Wings*, I was intrigued by this actress, and wanted to know more about her. Her character seems like the honest, "girl next door" type. Two books and 19 films later, I even tried to track down which exact record it was that she listened to on the train going to Hollywood to start her career. Not sure, as there are many different versions of *The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers*, but somehow whenever I listen to that tune it comforts me in some strange way, although just a few months ago I had never heard it before. It seems that somehow I had connected emotionally with the story of her life and who she was, the movies being reference points for things that were in reality.

Perhaps yet another odd thing was that when I first watched her movies, her facial expressions reminded me a lot of a lady I knew. And there was definitely the sense of something different

about this actress from the others. Where watching most any movie star is just entertainment, I had the feeling there was an emotional, passionate quality about this silent actress that caused people to go nuts over her in the past. Something about her makes you want to be with her, and instead of just watching a film like in standard behavior, you fantasize about romancing her, and her falling in love with you. Until you watch *Mantrap*, and are reminded it's too good to be true. Ha.

But back to radio. After years in retirement and seclusion, she briefly appeared in the only radio cameo that I know of her participating in. In *Truth or Consequences*, Clara came across matter-of-factly for the "March of Dimes." She made a statement for the charity, thanking listeners for donations.

The actual audio seems hard to find or even lost. From notes on *Truth or Consequences* episodes we have some information, including, "Following the identification, there was a pick-up from Las Vegas, Nevada, for the special guests: Clara Bow (Mrs. Rex Bell), who told about the way she was heard as Mrs. Hush every week, broadcasting from an auto park near her Las Vegas home. With Clara Bow, appearing on the program, was her husband Rex Bell, and her two children, George and Toni Bell, who never knew their mother was Mrs. Hush until this very evening. Clara Bow then told how she kept her identity known from her family, including the nearest neighbor who almost surprised her just when she was starting out to the "*Shang-ri-La*" where she made her broadcasts. Ralph Edwards told Clara Bow that he was sending her a special award, as a way of saying "thank you." A golden statuette, in behalf of the National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis, was going to be bestowed to Clara Bow as a result of the letters



and contributions to the March of Dimes from contestants and radio listeners who sought to identify "Mrs. Hush." An estimated total of \$400,000 was raised as a result of the contest. According to a representative of the March of Dimes, this was the largest single radio contribution ever received by the March of Dimes Fund. More than one million letters were sent in by contestants, each with a donation."

The announcer stated "We know that for many years, you've wanted nothing more than the privacy of your home and family, you voluntarily quit films at the pinnacle of your career, because you wanted a normal home life, with your husband Rex Bell, and your two wonderful sons, George and Tony, you're very happy, and even the hundreds of fan letters that still pour into your home weekly could not sway you from this privacy. We know for a fact that you are constantly turning down fabulous film contracts.



Mrs. Clara Bow, or as she has been so happily known for a good many years, "Mrs. Rex Bell." How ironic, that this legendary movie actress that was seen and not heard for most of her career, finally was heard and not seen.

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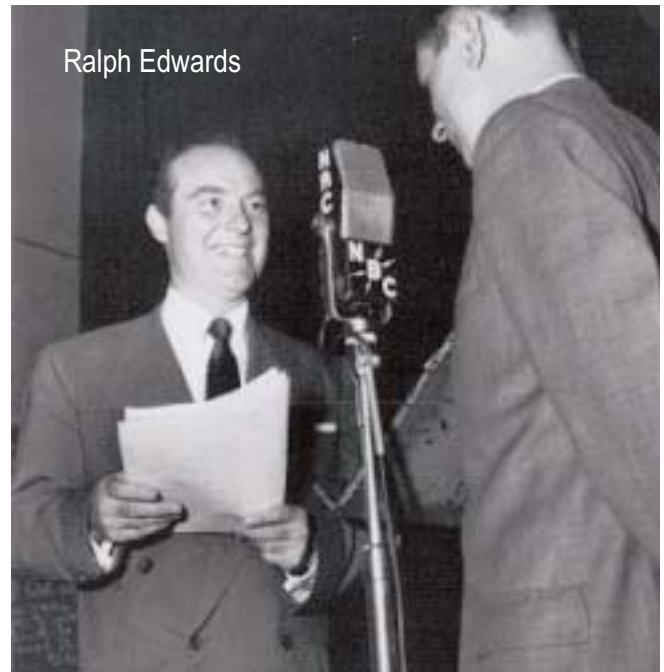
Clara Bow on Truth or Consequences

by Martin Grams Jr.

Hollywood celebrities participating on a radio quiz program was not uncommon during the forties. In 1946, when Jack Benny prompted an “I Can’t Stand Jack Benny because...” contest, inviting radio listeners to submit the closing half of the statement, screen horror icon Peter Lorre was one of the three judges. (Ronald Colman read the prize-winning submission.) But when it came to stunts, you could look no further than Ralph Edwards and his quiz show, *Truth or Consequences*, which is regarded as one of the most popular audience participation programs of the forties. Little did he know at the time the program first premiered in the airwaves, on the evening of August 17, 1940, he would ultimately become host to one of the most popular sex symbols of the silent cinema... Clara Bow.

Sponsored by the Procter & Gamble Company, *Truth or Consequences* originated out of New York City with Ralph Edwards as master of ceremonies and Bill Meeder at the organ. Participants were picked from the audience and on mike were asked a question. If the contestant answered correctly, they received \$15. If they answered incorrectly, they received \$5 — but they must pay a consequence — which was usually submitted by the radio audience. The best consequence act of the evening, as shown by the applause meter, won a \$25 Defense Bond. Contestants who were chosen from the audience but did not get a chance to appear on the program received \$2. Each contestant, whether appearing on the program or not, received five large cakes of Ivory Soap. (Procter & Gamble had to inject their product placement somewhere...)

Highlights of the program included the April



5, 1941 broadcast, which originated from Hollywood instead of New York City. During the program, Mrs. James Hays, winner of the Grand Prize in the Ivory contest, spoke a few words. On the August 2, 1941 broadcast, Martin Lewis, editor of *Movie-Radio Guide* magazine, presented a trophy from the magazine to Ralph Edwards for his program.

Beginning with the March 17, 1945, broadcast, *Truth or Consequences* originated out of Hollywood instead of New York. The format of the program also changed with the times, offering unique ways of awarding prizes to contestants. On the evening of December 29, 1945, Edwards began what was intended as a spoof of giveaway shows but soon propelled into a phenomenon. Each week a veiled mystery man, known only as “Mr. Hush,” gave clues to his identity in doggerel. Edwards wanted Albert Einstein, who wasn’t interested: he settled for Jack Dempsey, which took five weeks for a contestant to guess correctly. The pot built week after week, providing the winner of that contest a total of \$13,500.



A subsequent “Mrs. Hush” contest began on the evening of January 25, 1947. The stunt was tied in with the March of Dimes. Listeners who heard the woman’s voice and thought they could identify the owner of the voice could send their letters to “Mrs. Hush, Hollywood, California.” (Back then the U.S. Post Office was able to deliver letters with such addresses. And letters were delivered almost overnight. Talk about the inefficiency of today’s system!) Listeners were instructed to complete in 25 words or less the following sentence, “We should all support the March of Dimes because —.” Radio listeners had to make sure their name, mailing address and telephone number were printed plainly in the upper right-hand corner of the paper upon which their letter was written. They were also required to include a contribution to the March of Dimes. Any amount was allowed. From a penny to a \$100 bill, submissions and donations

poured into the Mrs. Hush office. While the donations were accepted, an estimated ten percent of the submissions were thrown out. Some listeners did not write their name and phone number clear enough to be understood. (Hey, sloppy handwriting is more common than you think.)

The radio announcer explained that two weeks from tonight, the writers of the three best letters would have a chance to answer a telephone call from Ralph Edwards and have a chance to identify Mrs. Hush. The prize for identifying Mrs. Hush was a 1947 Ford Sportsman Convertible automobile, a Bendix washer, and a round-trip ticket to New York City for two with a weekend reservation at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel while in the city. Who could not resist mailing a donation to the March of Dimes for a chance at that?

For every week contestants could not identify Mrs. Hush, three more prizes were added to the pot. It was requested of the radio audience not to include the name of Mrs. Hush in their letters — that would be reserved for the phone call broadcast “live” on the air. Listeners could submit a donation every week if the contestants could not guess correctly.

Because the program was not transcribed and a repeat broadcast for the West Coast was “dramatized,” the West Coast radio audience was instructed to be at the phone during the East Coast broadcast, in case they were to receive the call. Only one attempt would be made to reach the listener. On a technical side, before the radio contestant went on the air, a representative of the radio program sought verbal permission to re-enact the on-air conversation for the West Coast broadcast.

The judges in the contest were Federal Judge J.F.T. O’Conner, Roy Natiger, head of

the Los Angeles County Chapter of the National Foundation of the March of Dimes, and Dr. Vierling Kersey, Superintendent of Los Angeles City Schools. This was for the slogan contest and the choosing of the contestants. Entries were judged on the originality, aptness of thought, and sincerity. (And of course, whether the handwriting could be read.)

It was specified that Mrs. Hush could be from anywhere, and not necessarily from Hollywood. On the January 25, 1947, broadcast, Mrs. Hush read the following four-line jingle:

“Two o’clock and all is well;
Who it is I cannot tell;
Queen has her King, it’s true,
But not her ribbon tied in blue.”

A celebrity guest did assist with the January 25 broadcast, actress Louise Arthur, but she was not Mrs. Hush and that was clarified for the radio audience. For the February 1 broadcast, it was specified that any letters received through February 4 would be counted in the February 8 broadcast when Ralph Edwards phoned three lucky contestants. Letters received after February 4 and up through the next week would be used on the contest for February 15, etc.

On the February 1 broadcast, two of the famous Basenjis dogs, the barkless of Africa (Belgian Congo), were used in a contest. Ralph Edwards commented upon the growing popularity of the dogs as household pets in the country. He referred to the *Magazine Digest* January issue which had an article about the dogs. The dogs used on the program were flown in from the Hallwyre Kennels in Dallas, Texas. Three more prizes were added to the pot for this broadcast, even though Edwards did not call any contestants. A \$1,000 full-length silver fox coat (provided by I.J. Fox), a Columbia Trailer, fully equipped and sleeps four, and a \$1,000 di-



amond and ruby Bulova watch.

During the February 8, 1947 broadcast, the three people who were phoned had failed to identify Mrs. Hush, so three more prizes were added to the pot. These included a Tappan range, a Jacobs Home Freeze Unit packed with Birdseye Foods, and a 1947 RCA Phonograph-Victrola combination with 100 records. Edwards reminded the radio listeners that Mrs. Hush was heard from “Shang-ri-la,” an unknown place somewhere in the United States. The remainder of the program had a “reducing stunt” in which two contestants were presented with \$15 each and a card entitling each to take a special reducing course of 12 lessons at Terry Hunt’s Health System on La Cienega in Hollywood. Also featured was a stunt titled “Baby Pig.” The pig was presented to a contestant, complete with nursing bottle, diaper, etc. so the contestant could care for it properly.

The February 15, 1947 broadcast originated from the Golden Gate Theater in San Francisco. The voice of “Mrs. Hush” remained

unidentified and once again three more prizes were added to the pot to hold over for the next week. These included an electric refrigerator, a vacuum cleaner with accessories, and a week's vacation for two in Sun Valley with air transportation both ways.

The program resumed in Hollywood with the February 22, 1947 broadcast. "Mrs. Hush" was again unidentified and three additional prizes were added: a Brunswick billiard table installed in the winner's home and complete with all sporting accessories needed to play the game; a \$1,000 art-carved diamond ring designed by J.R. Wood; and a complete Hart Schaffner Marx wardrobe of clothes for each adult man and woman in the winner's family. There was a guest during the broadcast, Miss Clair Dodson, an Earl Carroll show girl, who assisted Ralph Edwards by entertaining one of the contestants.

The March 1, 1947 broadcast featured a



stunt whereby guest Dick Moorman, a veteran now working and trying to find a place to live in California, dictates a letter to his fiancée back in Long Island, New York... or so he thinks as he dictates that he will send for her so they may be married as soon as he rents an apartment or a house for them to live. Actually, the fiancée, Miss Gloria Minay, was the girl to whom he was giving the dictation. She was aptly disguised by Hollywood makeup artists who made her hair blond and used blue contact lenses to make her brown eyes appear blue. Gloria and her family were flown to Los Angeles and all expenses were paid by the producers of the program. In addition, the couple after their Hollywood marriage would be sent to Chicago where they would enjoy an all-expense-paid honeymoon in a Celotex pre-engineered home built by the Celotex people on Seventh Street next to the Stevens Hotel in Chicago. The trip to Chicago and back would be made on the Superchief and when the couple returned from their honeymoon, they would find a Celotex house waiting to be put up for them wherever they wanted to live — the house would be just like the one in which they spent their honeymoon. Ralph Edwards told the audience that the house would be furnished with furniture as well. (When the contestant discovered that his fiancée was right on the stage with him, he said, "Oh, Christ!" which did not go over well with the network censors.)

The "Mrs. Hush" voice is once again unidentified and three more gifts were added for next week's program: an Oil-O-Matic burner completely installed with a year's supply of fuel, a Piper Cub airplane, and free maid service for one year. Due to a faulty line connection, at 8:54 p.m., the "Mrs. Hush" portion stopped momentarily and the two words, "has her," was lost

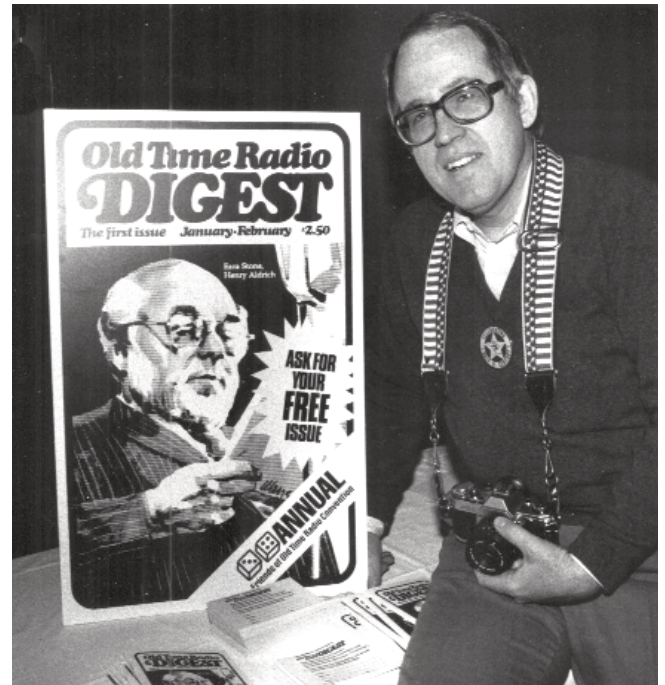
over the air.

During the March 8, 1947 broadcast, "Mrs. Hush" was once again unidentified. Three additional prizes were added to the pot: a 144-piece china set, a typewriter, and a complete house-painting job inside and outside with Sherwin Williams paint.

Finally, on the broadcast of March 15, "Mrs. Hush" was identified. Mrs. William H. McCormick of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, answered her telephone call from Ralph Edwards and she said "Clara Bow." Mrs. McCormick's winnings, valued at the time between \$17,590 and \$18,000, included: a 1947 convertible car, an electric washer, round-trip plane ticket for two to New York City with a week and a suite at the Waldorf-Astoria, a \$1,000 full-length Silver Fox fur coat, a house-trailer fully equipped for four people, a \$1,000 diamond and ruby wrist watch, a home-freeze-unit stocked with frozen foods, a Tappan gas range, a 1947 RCA Victor console radio-phonograph with 100 records, a refrigerator (Electrolux), a full-size home-billiard table with all equipment and installation, a furnace with a year's fuel supply to complete the home-heating unit; a 144-piece china set, free maid service for one year, complete house-painting job inside and out with Sherwin Williams paint, a typewriter, an all-Metal airplane, a week's vacation for two at Sun Valley, Idaho, with transportation both ways, a \$1,000 diamond ring, an electric vacuum cleaner with all the attachments and a complete Hart Schaffner Marx wardrobe for every adult member of the immediate family.

Mrs. McCormick said she planned to divide her winnings with her neighbor, Mrs. A.H. Timms, and her sister, Mrs. William Harmon, both of whom helped identify Mrs. Hush. Following the identification, there was a pick-up from Las Vegas, Nevada, for the special guests:

Thirty years ago Bob Burchett gave the first issue of the Digest away **free** at the 1984 Newark Friends of Old Radio Convention in hopes you would like what you saw and subscribe. Over the thirty years many did subscribe and kept the Digest coming. He is **still** making the same offer in hopes you like what you see and will want to subscribe.



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Clara Bow (Mrs. Rex Bell), who told about the way she was heard as Mrs. Hush every week, broadcasting from an auto park near her Las Vegas home. With Clara Bow, appearing on the program, was her husband Rex Bell, and her two children, George and Toni Bell, who never knew their mother was Mrs. Hush until this very evening. Clara Bow then told how she kept her identity known from her family, including the nearest neighbor who almost surprised her just when she was starting out to the “Shang-ri-La” where she made her broadcasts. Ralph Edwards told Clara Bow that he was sending her a special award, as a way of saying “thank you.” A golden statuette, in behalf of the National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis, was going to be bestowed to Clara Bow as a result of the letters and contributions to the March of Dimes from contestants and radio listeners who sought to identify “Mrs. Hush.” An estimated total of \$400,000 was raised as a result of the contest. According to a representative of the March of Dimes, this was the largest single radio contribution ever received by the March of Dimes Fund. More than one million letters were sent in by contestants, each with a donation.

During the broadcast of March 22, the guests were Mrs. William McCormick and her husband. Having won the Mrs. Hush contest the week prior, she and her husband were flown to Hollywood for the broadcast. They talked about what they planned to do with the prizes. The McCormick family included three sons (the oldest was 14 and the baby was 18 months). The boys were back home listening to the broadcast. The evening’s program featured a take-off called “Mrs. Hush’s Mother-In-Law” in which the mothers-in-law of three contestants were hidden in the studio. Each told their in-laws what they thought of them but the in-laws had to identify their respective mother-in-laws. Another stunt



featured a girl sent to the corner of Sunset and Vine to organize a Community Sing. She received one dollar for every person who joined her singing group. The program had a pick-up from the corner so listeners could judge the success of the singing group.

Later in the year, starting October 4, *Truth or Consequences* stopped re-enacting the repeat broadcasts and instead recorded each episode for later playback. This system was dropped in August of 1948 and then reinstated in August of 1949. The program made a quick jump to CBS under sponsorship of Philip Morris, before returning to NBC for Pet Milk. The radio program expired in 1956.

The “Mrs. Hush” contest also served as a clever marketing ploy to promote the radio program. Numerous periodicals covered the contest, hoping to convince their readers to tune in and try to guess the identity of the mystery woman. Perhaps no other contest on *Truth or Consequences* gained such momentum until 1948, when the secret identity craze peaked with the “Walking Man” contest, which built to a then-fabulous jackpot of \$22,500. That’s right, folks had to guess who the mysterious man was simply by the way he walked. That man turned out to be Jack Benny. ■

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An Introduction to BOSTON BLACKIE

By James Peyton

"Enemy to those who make him an enemy, friend to those who have no friends." Along with the organ music, this was the introduction to the classic 1940s radio program, *"Boston Blackie"*.

Boston Blackie (Horatio Black) is a detective character that was first published as a 1919 book, later was produced on radio, and also appeared in movies, silents, and television. The character was one that started out on the wrong side of the law, but ended up on the right side. He was a former safecracker and ex-con, who together with his girlfriend Mary Wesley, solved crimes. Mary's father also had trouble with the law. Although Blackie solved crime after crime, his antagonist Inspector Faraday never gave him a break until much later in the series. These are the 3 main characters in the show, unless you consider Blackie's pal, Shorty, that shows up from time to time in the episodes.



Chester Morris

The radio series began on NBC in 1944. 13 episodes were originally made. The radio character was first played by Chester Morris, but for most of the series was played by Richard Kollmar. The Kollmar series ran for 220 episodes. (Morris also starred in the Boston Blackie movies before, during, and nearly to the end of the radio series run, films ending in 1949 and radio series in 1950) This second Blackie started after the show returned to the air on April 15th, 1945. Dick Kollmar was a Broadway actor



and "Dick" of WOR, New York's "Dorothy and Dick" radio show. His friend and nemesis Inspector Faraday was played by Maurice Tarplin, who also voiced the character *"The Mysterious Traveler"* on that radio series, and played as the announcer "Dr. Weird" in the horror themed radio program "The Strange Dr. Weird." Richard Lane and Frank Orth also voiced the role of Faraday. Mary Wesley was played first by Lesley Woods and later by Jan Miner. (in her later years Palmolive Madge) Blackie's pal Shorty was played by Tony Barrett. Organist Lew White composed the *"Boston Blackie"* theme music.

To quote the Internet Archive, *"The Boston Blackie* radio series, starring Chester Morris, began June 23, 1944, on NBC as a summer replacement for *The Amos 'n' Andy Show*. Sponsored by Rinso, the series continued until September 15 of that year.

Unlike the concurrent films,

Blackie had a steady romantic interest in the radio show -- Lesley Woods appeared as Blackie's girlfriend Mary Wesley. Harlow Wilcox was the show's announcer. On April 11, 1945,



Jan Miner



Richard Kollmar

Richard Kollmar took over the title role in a radio series syndicated by Frederic W. Ziv to Mutual and other network outlets. Over 200 episodes of this series were produced between 1944 and October 25, 1950. Other sponsors included Lifebuoy Soap,

Champagne Velvet beer, and R&H beer." (Internet Archive, Old Time Radio Researchers Group)

Episodes are available for free download on the Internet Archive. (<https://archive.org>.) The directory for Boston Blackie on the archive is Audio Archive, Radio Programs, Old Time Radio, Boston Blackie - Single Episodes. The episodes available at the time of this writing (2014) range from the first episode to episode 231. There are episodes missing or lost, but the majority of the episodes from 1944 to 1949 are there. There are 199 episodes total available for you to download and archive. These are in MP3 format. An episode is around 5 MB. There is also a "Certified Set" which has extras not found on the singles page. That is the recommended download. There are 5 CD size downloads. (Around 650 MB, or Megabytes)

Episode #1 is titled "The Jonathan Diamond" and is dated June 23, 1944. Episode #231 is titled "The Professor and Rufus Rob the Bank Safe" and is dated June 15, 1949. It looks like the series ended in 1950, and those episodes are lost. "Mr. Kollmar portrayed Blackie from Apr 11, 1945 until Oct 25, 1950. There were a total of 233 episodes of the series spread out over the years 1944 to 1950. There were 302 broadcast dates including original shows plus repeats. There are at this time 198 or so shows in

circulation." (Judge, D., 2005, Pg.1) A typical episode is close to a half hour long, and often ends with some interesting organ music. Common themes are crime stories, organ music, a love-hate relationship between Blackie and Faraday, and a few bad puns.

This is a classic program of Old Time Radio, with many hours of enjoyment. You'll love to hate Faraday, probably enjoy the music and the stories, and you can freely download most of the series in about 15 minutes. ■



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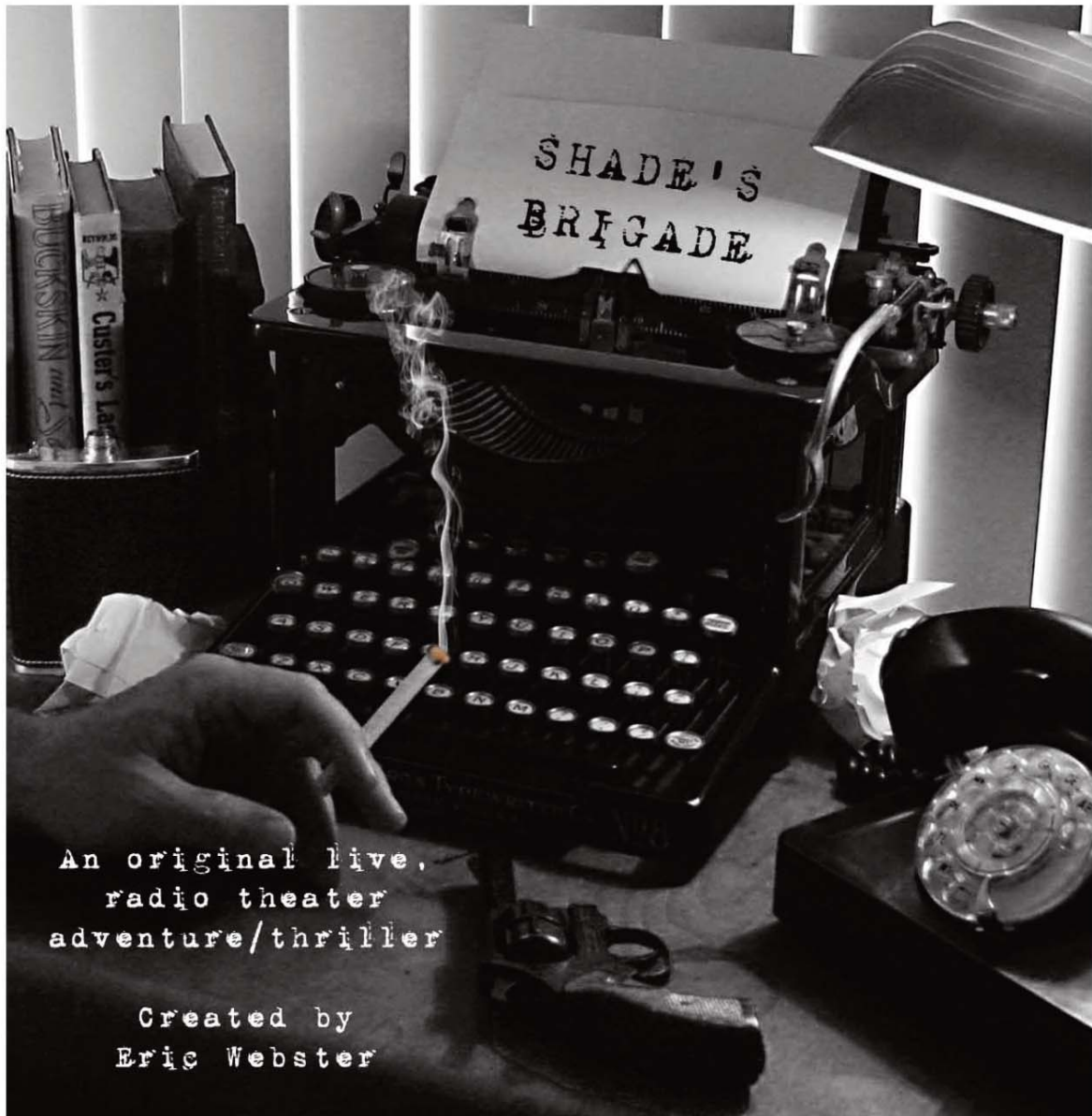
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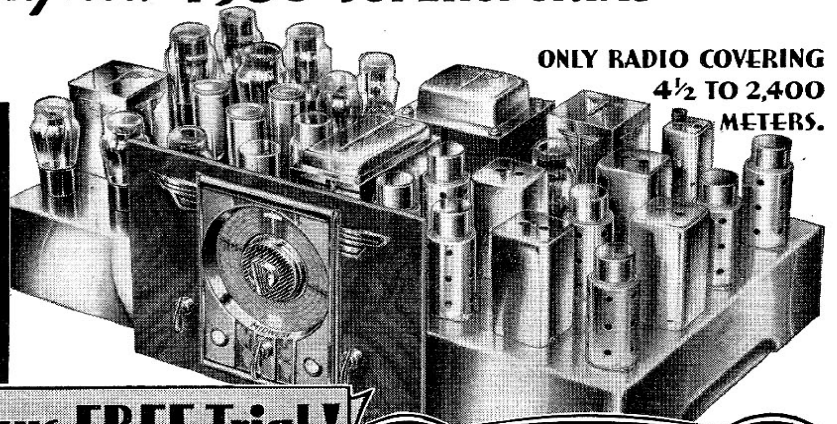
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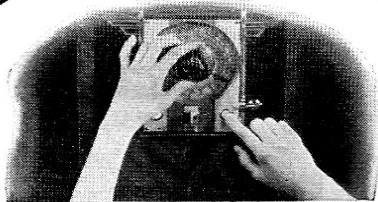
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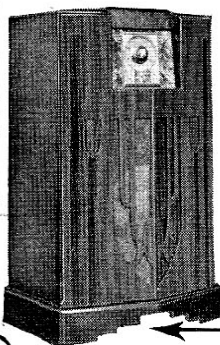
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Washington, D. C.—We are more pleased with our Midwest every day. We tune in GSB, London—EAQ, Spain—DJC, Germany—12RO, Rome, etc., most every evening with local volume. Robert H. Gerhardt



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“If we had it to do OVER AGAIN”

A great Radio Pair Look Back Over Their Career
on Their Fourteenth Anniversary by Amos & Andy



When the nation turned the hands of its time-pieces to adjust them to the new war time, we started wondering what we would do if some magic power could enable us to turn back over the years of Amos 'n' Andy's existence. We wondered if, perhaps, we would be guided differently. We talked about what might have been done with the characters Madam Queen, Brother Crawford, the Kingfish and all the others. Would we have made them mean what they do today! Would we have changed any of the patterns we have followed steadily all these years?

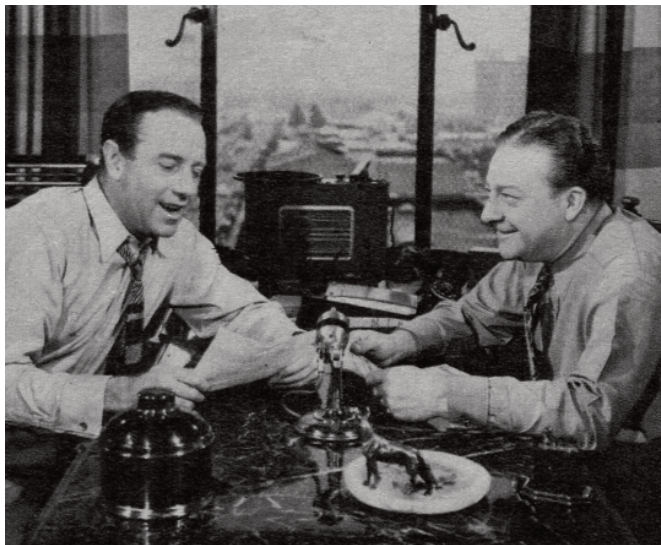
Of course, in the first place we don't want to turn back the clock. Even though we realize

there were things we could have improved, we're content to carry on from here. But it's always interesting to go back over the past and perhaps remodel it in imagination. It's interesting to us to do so, because we have so completely and enjoyably lived the lives of Amos 'n' Andy.

There's a lot to look back over—a matter of millions of words of dialog wrung from our experience and from thin air and knocked out on the old typewriter; a matter of a decade and a half of broadcasting five days a week; a matter of a couple of hundred fictitious characters that we have had to make live in our minds and



THIS ISN'T "Amos 'n' Andy." At least, it wasn't when this picture was taken. It's "Sam 'n' Henry," a blackface skit done by Freeman Gosden (right) and Charles Correll over WGN, Chicago, before they switched to WMAQ (later to NBC) and became "Amos 'n' Andy" in March, 1928. This picture, taken in 1926, was the first photograph released revealing the identities of "Sam 'n' Henry"



QUITE DIFFERENT are the pictures directly above and below from the one at the top of the page. The men are older by some fifteen years. The office and studio fixtures are moderm. Times have changed. But "Amos 'n' Andy" haven't. Above: Amos (left) tries out a new character voice on a transcribing-machine in their office.

in our voices.

Yes, a lot of water has run under the bridge since we, Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll, sat down at a microphone to become "Amos 'n' Andy"—March 19, 1928—after holding forth as "Sam 'n' Henry" for a couple of years. Radio has changed a lot, and the world itself has changed somewhat.

But we're still contented that *Amos 'n' Andy* are the same old *Amos 'n' Andy* they've always been.

One of the policies we have followed most steadfastly throughout the years, and one which might, perhaps, be most debatable, is the "no audience" practice. If we were starting all over, would we follow that policy again? We're sure of our answer to that: We would. There are two reasons and neither of them is temperamental aloofness. In the first place, we try so intently to put ourselves completely into the many roles we portray that we feel spectators make us fall short in building a perfectly natural atmosphere. In the second place, we have always felt that radio in general and our homey little act in particular is for the listeners in the home, and is usually more effective with no possible intrusive sounds from an audience. We still have both reasons for carrying on that policy.

And because we believed our skits should be aimed directly at the family sitting in the living-room, including the kids, we've always had for our number-one script rule "Keep it clean." Next to that, these rules: "Keep it plain," "Keep it true to character," and of course "Make it funny." We'd have the same rules if we had it all to do over. Naturally, we haven't always been funny to everybody. But we don't think we've fallen short in the first rule—and we certainly don't think that following this

principle has been a mistake. Radio and the world may have undergone some changes—but people and human values haven't.

One thing we've sometimes wavered about is whether we should have more performers in our sketch instead of portraying practically all the characters ourselves. We have had a few voices other than our own in the story. We have considered others. And we still wonder if we would have a bigger cast if we were starting again. It isn't a snap—being so many different people. But we've got a mighty big kick out of it.

Then there's the fact that we've had a number of characters, mostly women, who have been talked about plenty on the show but who have never been heard speaking themselves. We might have had Madam Queen and some of the others more vocally active, but listeners seemed to know them and take to them just about as well without hearing them.

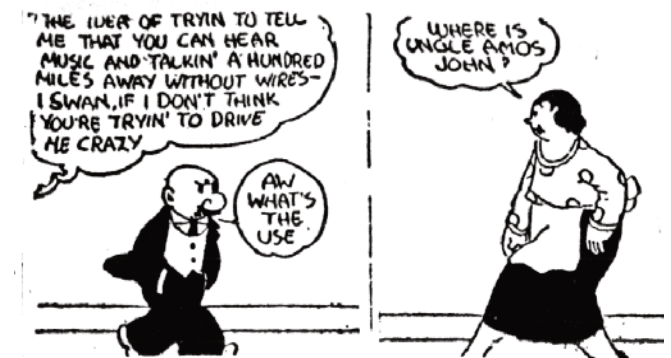
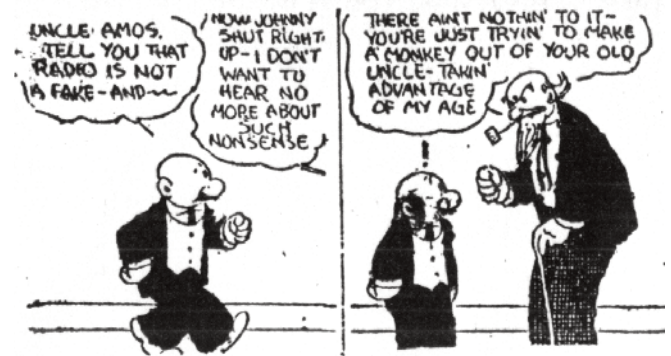
There are many other questions that could be argued over. For instance, would we have the same old reliable theme song? Undoubtedly. We still think the "Perfect Song," which was written for "The Birth of a Nation," a perfect song for the theme melody of "Amos 'n' Andy." Would we have Amos get married and be a family man and Andy continue to be a blundering Don Juan? Yes, for that seems to us to be the ideal situation for working in both ludicrous humor and human interest of a little more serious nature. Would we like the same time of day for broadcasting? Yes, again. Most people are at home and most people want to relax and grin a bit at that time of day. We like to help them.

Well, it looks as if there isn't much we'd care to change. That's true. Not because we think our work has been perfect but because we've got such a tremendous kick out of doing it our way. And as long as listeners tune in and smile with

us and tell us once in a while they're still with us-and, of course, buy our sponsor's product! we should not worry about new formulas.

Maybe there would be a few things we'd do differently if we had it to do over again. But for the most part it would be the same "Amos 'n' Andy that we, Gosden and Correll, have lived with these rapid radio years. "Check. and double check." ■

Reprinted from Movie-Radio Guide Volume 11, Number 24 March 21-27, 1942



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Baseball in Old Time Radio

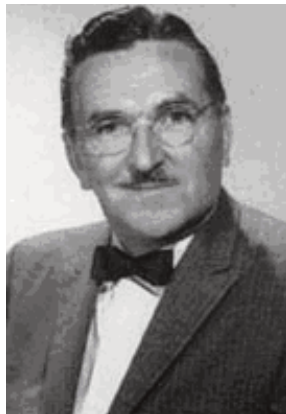
by Tim DeForest



The first baseball game was played in 1846 between the Knickerbocker Club of New York City and The New York Nine. By the time the Civil War ended, the game had gained in popularity and was well on its way to becoming the National Pastime.

The first professional team, the Cincinnati Red Stockings, was formed in 1869. By 1876, sixteen pro teams formed the National League. That's the same year Custer fought his last stand at Little Big Horn. We don't often connect baseball with the Wild West, but it actually wasn't unusual for professional teams to barnstorm from town to town, taking on the local amateur clubs.

That's the situation we find in the August 2, 1959 episode of *Gunsmoke*, titled "Ball Nine, Take Your Base." A pair of murderous gamblers keep Matt Dillon busy, but this entertaining episode also reminds us that the rules of the game were still evolving throughout the 19th Century. There's a scene in which



Doc Adams, who has been selected umpire, is meeting with the two team leaders to finalize the rules. One of the managers is shocked at the idea of a batter being allowed to take first base after only nine balls, asking "Doesn't that make it hard for the pitcher?"

Old Time Radio returned to baseball many times for both *comedy* and *drama*. Often, the colorful lives of real-life players provided plenty of storytelling fodder. *The Cavalcade of America* presented us with the story of John McGraw, the quick-tempered tyrant who managed the New York Giants for thirty years. ("The Great McGraw"--4/15/1946)

Destination Freedom did an imaginative and entertaining biography of Satchel Page, a star of the Negro Leagues and perhaps the best pitcher in baseball history. The episode smoothly combined both spoken narration and song to tell the story of a man who "struck out so many men the outfielders were scared they be jailed for vagrancy, loitering around the ballparks with nothing to do." The story milks a lot of drama out of Page's quest to strike out Josh Gibson, the best hitter in the Negro Leagues, and Page's later efforts to get signed with a Major League team.

On October 4, 1943, *The Lux Radio Theater* gave us an adaptation of *The Pride of the Yankees*, which recounted the tragic but inspiring life of Lou Gehrig. Gary Cooper reprised his Oscar-winning performance for the broadcast.

Baseball remained our nation's most popular sport throughout most of the 20th Century and pretty much every long-running show on radio touched on the subject from time to time. In fact, if you were to judge from the crime and mystery shows, you might come to the conclusion that it was impossible to attend a baseball game without stumbling over a dozen or so

gamblers and killers.

Boston Blackie dealt with crime on the baseball diamond at least twice. The April 14, 1946 episode had him investigating the murder of a player who was shot while sliding into second base. A year later, on April 29, 1947, the murder of a gambler drew Blackie into a plot involving a player who had a lot of slugging power but very little brain power: the villains were using him as a patsy for their nefarious scheme.

Ellery Queen investigated the inexplicable disappearance of a baseball player's lucky bat on the eve of the World Series. In this April 3, 1957 episode, the key to solving the crime was figuring out how the bat was stolen, which in turn would put the finger on who stole it.

The Saint spent his September 3, 1950 episode looking into the possibility that an up-and-coming minor league pitcher might be on a gambler's payroll. Before long, *The Saint* is knocked out and someone is murdered. But that's pretty much a typical day in the life of Simon Templar and he both fingers the killer and gives the pitcher a chance for redemption before the show ends.



Vincent Price

On June 26, 1946, *The Damon Runyon Theater* told the story of "Baseball Hattie," the wife of a pitcher who falls back into a wild lifestyle and soon wracks up a lot of gambling debts, leading to an offer to throw a game. But Hattie loves baseball as much as she loves her wayward husband and will take drastic action if necessary to keep him from shaming the game.

Heck, even the Devil himself tried to horn his way into the national pastime. The June 15, 1946



Boston Blackie

episode of *Family Theater* presented us with Jack Webb as a mysterious baseball scout who tries to convince an idealistic young pitcher that the only way to get to the Major Leagues was to play dirty and think only of himself.

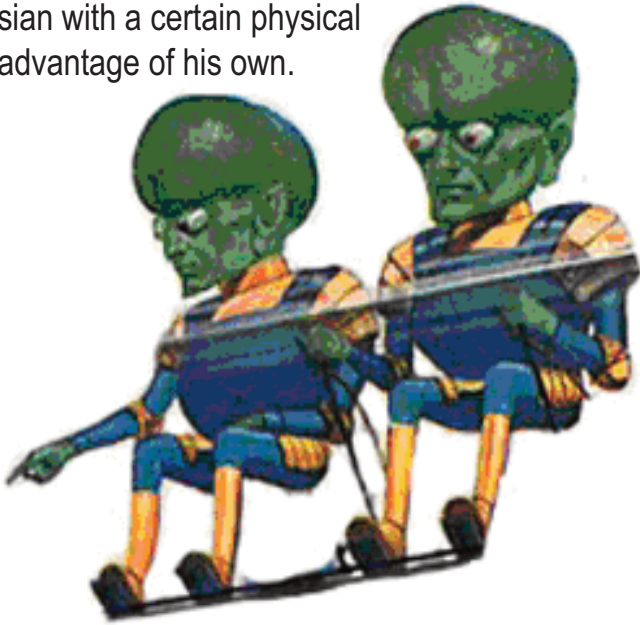
But not all baseball stories on radio were dripping with blood or potential corruption. On April 17, 1948, *Favorite Story* did a wonderful adaptation of the poem "Casey at the Bat," in which the star of the Mudville team is given a back story that gives the events of the poem an entertaining context.

The Columbia Workshop took the field on several occasions, including "The Day Baseball Died" (9/28/1946) in which a pitcher comes up with an unhittable pitch, sparking a debate over whether the game can survive this innovation. And "You Can Look It Up" (7/7/1957) was an adaptation of James Thurber's humorous short story about a manager that sends a midget to the plate, hoping to draw a walk. All the midget has to do is NOT swing at a pitch—so what could possibly go wrong?

Thurber wrote the short story in 1941 and proved to be prescient. In 1951, the St. Louis Browns really did send a midget named Eddie Gaedel to the plate in hopes he'd draw a walk.

He did and was then replaced by a pinch runner, ending a very short but unique Major League career.

Radio looked to the game's future when *X Minus One* gave us "Martian Sam" (4/3/1957), about the first non-human player in the game's history: A Martian with a very long arm who can strike out every batter he faces. Or he can at least until a rival team sends to the plate a Venusian with a certain physical advantage of his own.



Radio's best comedies often used baseball as fodder to generate laughs. On May 21, 1946, we find out that *Fibber McGee* once had a fast-ball that "fanned more men than Sally Rand." But now, as he gets ready to return to the mound for a local game, it seems that he's lost his stuff. Fortunately, he has a wife who's smarter than he is and Molly spots the problem in time to save the day.

On October 13, 1940, a World Series bet between Jack Benny and Phil Harris became a hilarious running gag throughout the episode.

And *The Great Gildersleeve* spent his April 7, 1948 episode stuck with the job of finding land for a kid's ball field after he accidentally pitched a baseball through the windshield of the mayor's car.

Madison High School, where *Our Miss Brooks* often clashed with the penny-pinching principal, suffered yet another financial crisis on March 26, 1950, when the school couldn't afford uniforms for the baseball team. This interfered with Miss Brooks plans to woo Mr. Boyten, the romantically impaired biology teacher, by taking him to the big game.



Eve Arden

Miss Brooks figured "If he spends enough time looking at curves and watching fellows trying to get to first base, it might give him an idea." But conflicting plans by Miss Brooks, Mr. Boyten, Principal Conklin and student Walter Denton to raise the needed money lead to chaos and her romantic plans crash and burn yet again.

Baseball has a rich and colorful history, full of drama, excitement, and humor; populated by players with unique and often exuberant personalities. America wouldn't be America without nine men out on the diamond, a batter at the plate and an umpire yelling "Play ball!" It's no wonder that the best old time radio shows turned to the sport again and again. ■

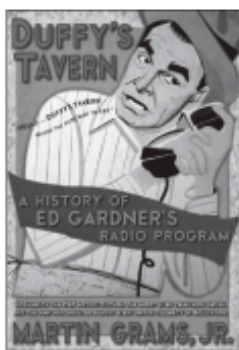
This article first appeared at www.otrcat.com.





“Hello, Duffy’s Tavern, where the elite meet to eat. Archie the manager speakin’... Duffy ain’t here”

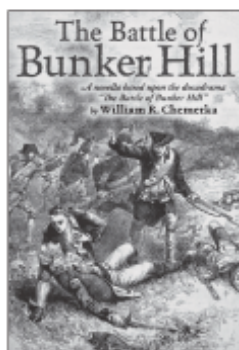
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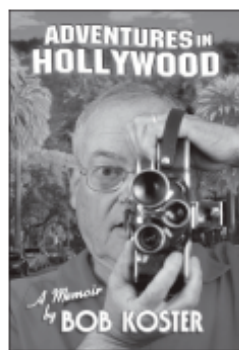
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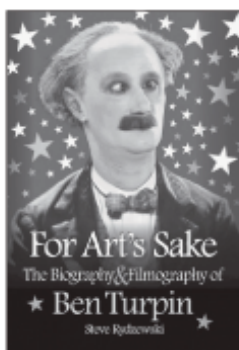
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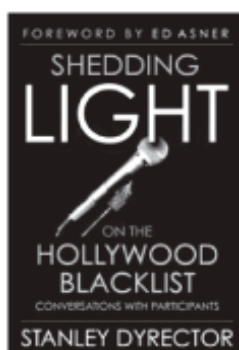
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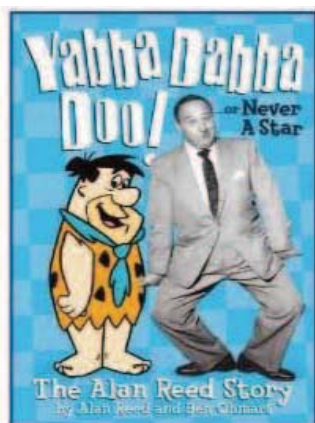


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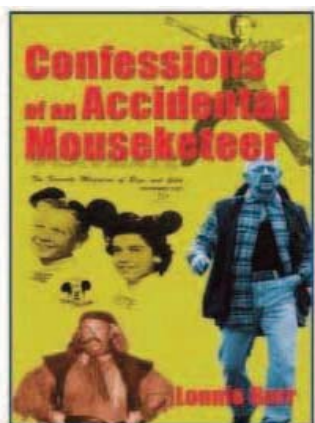
Ships in September



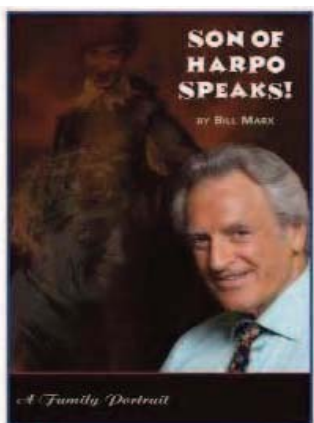
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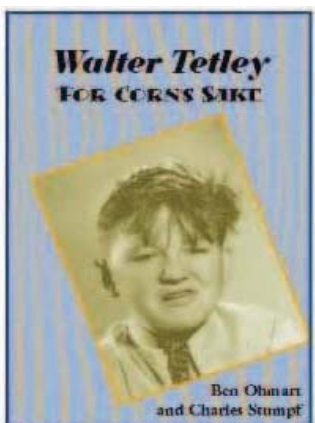
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OTRR ACQUIRES NEW EPISODES AND UPGRADED SOUND ENCODES FOR Mar/Apr

This is a list of newly acquired series/episodes. They may either be new to mp3 or better encodes. These were acquired by the Group during the months of Jan and Feb. They were purchased by donations from members and friends of the Old Time Radio Researchers. If you have cassettes that you would like to donate, please e-mail beshiresjim@yahoo.com For reel-to-reels, contact david0@centurytel.net & for transcription disks tony_senior@yahoo.com

Fibber McGee And Molly

55-06-16 The Woodpecker.wav
55-06-19 Counseling The Old Timer.wav
55-06-20 McGee Pawns Molly's Coat.wav
55-06-21 Hit And Run.wav
55-06-22 The Autographed Baseball.wav
55-06-23 McGee Bustles In The Kitchen.wav
55-09-26 The McGeeGas Saver.wav
55-09-27 McGee Gives A Gift To The Elks.wav

Gang Busters

50-06-10 The Case Of The Inside Track.mp3
50-09-30 The Case Of The Temperate Thief.mp3

Green Hornet, The

52-10-01 Political Crossfire.wav
52-10-03 Spy Master.wav
52-10-08 The Changing Alibi.wav
52-10-10 Keys To A Robbery.wav
52-10-15 Election Boomerang.wav
52-10-17 Proof Of Treasure.wav
52-10-22 Jeff Warren's Safe.wav
52-10-24 Unknown Assassin.wav
52-10-29 The Microfilm Of Death.wav
52-10-31 The Hawkridge Gems.wav
52-11-05 A Friday Night In The Mountains.wav
52-11-07 The Simple Clue.wav

52-11-12 The Triple Cross.wav
52-11-14 Ceiling On Crime.wav
52-11-19 The Cigarette Filters.wav
52-11-21 Shipment For Korea.wav
52-11-26 Gas House Ending.wav
52-11-28 Murder And Espionage.wav
52-12-05 Axford's Romantic Disaster.wav
52-12-03 Pretenders To The Throne.wav

Inner Sanctum

45-01-09 Desert Death.mp3
5-04-17 The Judas Clock.mp3
45-05-01 The Girl And The Gallows.mp3
45-05-22 Dead To Rights.mp3
45-06-19 Dead Men's Holiday.mp3
46-05-07 You Could Die Laughing.mp3
46-05-21 Detour To Terror.mp3
49-01-10 Murder Comes To Life.mp3
49-01-31 The Devil's Fortune.mp3
49-03-28 Appointment With Death.mp3
49-05-16 The Unburied Dead.mp3
52-08-24.mp3

Jack Benny

1948-11-07 Jack Hears an Echo (The Psychiatrist).mp3
1951-01-21 Jack Goes to Doctor for a Check-up.mp3
1951-03-18 Jack talks about his illness.mp3
1951-05-27 Jack meets Speed Riggs at the Doctors Office.mp3
1952-04-06 Jack goes to the dentist.mp3
1952-11-09 Jack goes to doctor for a vitamin shot.mp3
953-09-27 Polly goes to the psychiatrist.mp3
1954-11-28 Dennis sees a psychiatrist.mp3

Life of Riley

1944-04-16 Proxy Wedding (Part 1).mp3
1944-04-23 Proxy Wedding (Part 2).mp3
1945-03-18 Riley tries to become a pal to Junior.mp3
1945-03-25 Missing five dollars.mp3

Life of Riley

1946-06-29 Paper route subscription contest to go to camp.mp3
1946-11-02 Peg & Riley both run for park supervisor.mp3
1947-02-01 Mr X - Riley switched as a baby.mp3
1947-11-29 Thanksgiving with the Gillises.mp3
1948-08-27 Riley's night job.mp3
1949-02-25 Sneak preview of 'The Life of Riley' movie.mp3
1949-11-25 Thanksgiving dinner with the boss.mp3
1950-05-19 The electric company and Simon and Babs.mp3
1950-05-26 Peg in a beauty contest.mp3
1951-05-04 Riley and the marriage certificate.mp3
1951-06-01 Riley and the ballet.mp3

Line-Up, The

1951-01-11 The Mad Bomber Case.mp3
1951-03-27 The Lapinish Lighter-Upper Case.mp3

Lone Ranger

1942-06-08 Lumber for the Railroad (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-10 The Wrong Redskin (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-12 Outlaws in War Paint (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-15 Race to Dry Creek (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-17 Ambush at Bright Rainbow (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-19 Mortgages Paid Off (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-22 Badlands for Badmen (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-24 Clouds Across the Moon (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-26 Quicksand for a Gambler (Iron Spur

Series).mp3

1942-06-29 Trouble at the Canyon (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-07-01 Kidnapped (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-07-03 Surprise at Sunrise (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-07-06 End of the Iron Spur (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1947-03-03 Runaway Railroad.mp3
1947-11-07 The Union Pacific Series - Part One.mp3
1947-11-10 The Union Pacific Series - Part Two.mp3
1947-11-12 The Union Pacific Series - Part Three.mp3
1947-11-14 The Union Pacific Series - Part Four.mp3
1948-11-01 The Flashlight Ring - Part One.mp3
1948-11-03 The Flashlight Ring - Part Two.mp3

Man From Homicide, The

1951-07-09 Don Shelberger Murder.mp3
1951-07-16 Old Man Kelso.mp3

Mr And Mr North

1953-12-29 The Witness.wav
1943-09-22 The Contagious Confession.wav
1944-08-05 Pam Keeps Out Of Trouble (Mystery Plhse).wav
1950-12-05 Who Killed Mr Stefano.wav
1952-02-12 The Premature Corpse.wav
1953-12-22 Background For Murder.wav
1954-02-23 Winter Honeymoon.wav
xxxx-xx-xx Murder For Sale.wav

Nick Carter

1943-09-27 Glass Coffin.mp3
1943-10-18 State's Prison Evidence.mp3
1943-11-10 Drug Ring Murder.mp3
1943-11-17 Substitute Bride.mp3
1944-04-01 Professor's Secret.mp3

Nick Carter

1946-04-02 Eight Records of Death.mp3

1946-04-09 COT Disappearing Corpse.mp3
 1946-05-28 COT Demented Daughter.mp3
 1946-06-04 COT Dictaphone Murder.mp3
 1947-12-07 COT Exploded Alibi.mp3
 1947-12-28 COT Missing Street.mp3
 1948-03-14 COT Last Old Timer.mp3
 1948-03-21 COT Magic Rope.mp3
 1948-04-04 COT Star of Evil.mp3
 1949-12-25 COT Phantom Shoplifter.mp3

Night Watch

1954-05-03 Glass Breaker.mp3
 1954-07-10 Hammer 211.mp3

Our Land Be Bright

1948 Pgm #10 You and Your Ballot w Robert Montgomery (C).wav
 1948 Pgm #11 Men of Tomorrow w Abbott and

Costello (C).mp3
 1948 Pgm #12 Voices in the Dark (C).wav
 1948 Pgm #13 Play Ball w Bob Hope (C).wav
 1948 Pgm #2 No Vacancies w Joan Fontaine.wav
 1948 Pgm #3 Program for Peace w Herbert Marshall (C).wav
 1948 Pgm #4 Little Red School House w Adolph Menjou (C).wav
 1948 Pgm #5 Legislative Forum w Brian Aherne (C).wav
 1948 Pgm #6 Win the Peace w Jack Carson (C).wav
 1948 Pgm #7 Veterans At Work w Jack Carson
 1948 Pgm #8 Religion - War and Peace w Madeleine Carroll (C).wav

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Our Land Be right

1948 Pgm #9 For Those Who Served w Herbert Marshall (C).wav

Offical Detective

1956-02-03 Butcher Shop Murder.mp3

Our Miss Brooks

1948-11-21 The Model School Teacher.mp3
1949-02-13 Stretch the Basketball Star.mp3
1949-05-01 Walter v Stretch Grudge Match.mp3
1949-05-22 Peanuts, the Great Dane.mp3
1949-05-29 Arguments, Arguments!.mp3
1949-07-10 The Telegram.mp3
1949-07-24 Mrs Davis' Cookies.mp3
1949-08-07 Heat Wave.mp3
1949-09-25 Conklin Causes a Fight.mp3
1949-12-11 Game at Clay City.mp3
1949-12-18 A Letter to Santa.mp3
1950-01-01 Babysitting on New Year's Eve.mp3
1950-01-22 Professorship at State U.mp3
1950-02-05 Miss Enright's Dinner.mp3
1950-02-19 Valentine's Day Date.mp3
1950-05-07 Boynton's Barbecue.mp3
1950-05-14 Mr Boynton's Parents.mp3
1950-10-01 Measles Diagnosis.mp3
1955-08-21 Who's Going Where.mp3
1955-09-18 Oo-Oo-Me-Me-Tocoludi-Gucci-Mo-O-Moo.mp3

Phil Harris

1952-04-13 Alice's Easter Dress.mp3
1952-04-20 Alices' Old Boyfriend, George Henry
1952-04-27 Phil is Directed to Fire His Band.mp3
1952-05-04 Helping Alice with Spring Cleaning.mp3
1952-05-11 The Harris Kids on TV.mp3
1952-05-18 Julius is Missing.mp3
1952-05-25 Alice's Surprise Party for Mr. Scott.mp3
1952-10-05 Hotel Harris.mp3
1952-10-12 The Stolen US Mail.mp3

1952-10-19 Phil the Television Star.mp3
1952-10-26 Baby Alice's First Date.mp3
1952-11-02 Phil Helps Get Out the Vote.mp3
1952-11-09 Surprise Party for Phil.mp3
1952-11-16 Alice Buys a Business.mp3
1952-11-23 The Football Tickets.mp3
1952-11-30 Elliot's Girlfriend's Name is on Phil's Chest.mp3
1952-12-07 Julius is in Jail.mp3
1952-12-14 An Elephant for Mr Scott.mp3
1952-12-21 Women's Club Santa Claus.mp3
1952-12-28 New Year's Eve Party at the Har-rises.mp3

Police Blotter

1956-xx-xx Homicide By Hurricane.mp3

Somebody Knows

1950-08-24 The Black Dahlia.mp3

Squad Room

1955-xx-xx Body Found In A Plastic Bag.mp3

Treasury Agent

1947-08-11 The Case Of The Faithful Wife.mp3

Twenty-First Precinct

1956-06-28 Abandoned Baby.mp3

Under Arrest

1949-05-08 Mrs. Mollison's Handbag.mp3

Unit 88

1957-11-01 First Call - Attempted Suicide.mp3

Voice of the Army

Pgm #231 Red Points (C).wav
Pgm #232 Time Runs Out (C).wav
Pgm #253 Independence Day (C).wav
Pgm #254 They'll Always Remember (C).wav
Pgm #257 Someone to Watch Over Me (C).wav
Pgm #258 The Broken Strands (C).wav

Yours Truly Johnny Dollar

1955-10-17 The Chesapeake Fraud Matter 1.5.mp3
1955-10-18 The Chesapeake Fraud Matter 2.5.mp3
1955-10-19 The Chesapeake Fraud Matter

3.5.mp3

55-10-20 The Chesapeake Fraud Matter 4.5.mp3

Yours Truly Johnny Dollar

55-10-21 The Chesapeake Fraud Matter 5.5.mp3

55-10-24 The Alvin Summers Matter 1.5.mp3

55-10-25 The Alvin Summers Matter 2.5.mp3

55-10-26 The Alvin Summers Matter 3.5.mp3

55-10-27 The Alvin Summers Matter 4.5.mp3

55-10-28 The Alvin Summers Matter 5.5.mp3

55-10-31 The Valentine Matter 1.5.mp3

55-11-01 The Valentine Matter 2.5.mp3

55-11-02 The Valentine Matter 3.5.mp3

55-11-03 The Valentine Matter 4.5.mp3

55-11-04 The Valentine Matter 5.5.mp3

55-11-14 The Broderick Matter 1.5.mp3

55-11-15 The Broderick Matter 2.5.mp3

55-11-16 The Broderick Matter 3.5.mp3

55-11-17 The Broderick Matter 4.5.mp3

55-11-18 The Broderick Matter 5.5.mp3

56-02-27 The Fathom Five Matter 1.5.mp3

56-02-28 The Fathom Five Matter 2.5.mp3

56-02-29 The Fathom Five Matter 3.5.mp3

56-03-01 The Fathom Five Matter 4.5.mp3

56-03-02 The Fathom Five Matter 5.5.mp3

56-03-27 The LaMarr Matter 2.5.mp3

56-03-28 The LaMarr Matter 3.5.mp3

56-03-29 The LaMarr Matter 4.5.mp3

56-03-30 The LaMarr Matter 5.5.mp3

56-07-23 The Open Town Matter 1.5.mp3

56-07-24 The Open Town Matter 2.5.mp3

56-07-25 The Open Town Matter 3.5.mp3

56-07-27 The Open Town Matter 5.5.mp3

56-08-24 The Kranesburg Matter 1.6.mp3

56-08-27 The Kranesburg Matter 2.6.mp3

56-08-28 The Kranesburg Matter 3.6.mp3

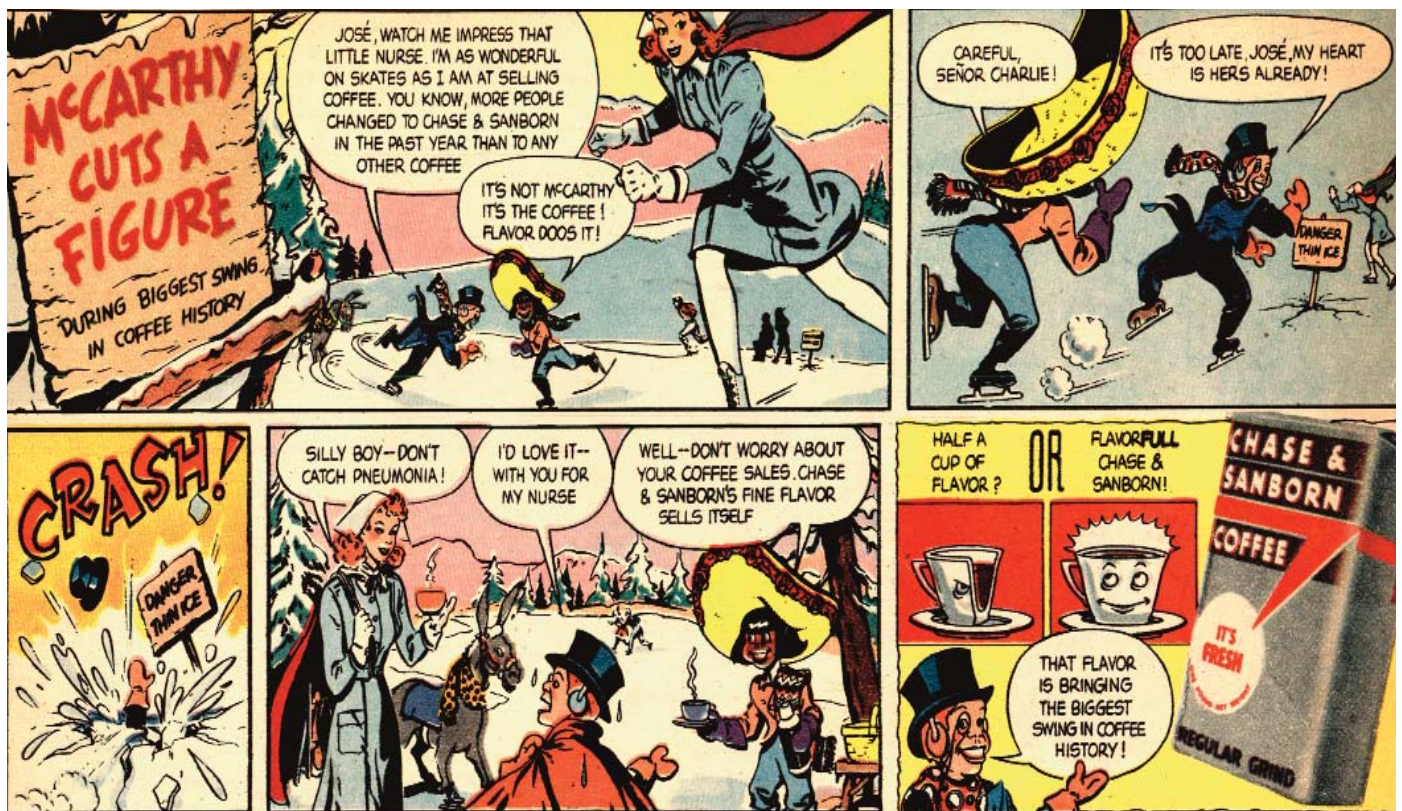
56-08-29 The Kranesburg Matter 4.6.mp3

56-08-30 The Kranesburg Matter 5.6.mp3

56-08-31 The Kranesburg Matter 6.6.mp3

56-11-18 The Markham Matter.mp3

56-11-25 The Royal Street Matter.mp3



PERIOD, END OF REPORT: Sam Spade on Radio

By Elizabeth McLeod

Radio wasn't all about hard-boiled detectives—even though you might think so given the popularity such programs enjoy today among enthusiasts and collectors of the medium. Nor was radio always about hard-boiled detectives—the genre didn't really move to the forefront of the medium until the mid-1940's, two full decades after the start of network broadcasting. And yet, while there was a lot more to network radio drama than rainswept streets, well-oiled roscoes, and mysterious blondes, hard-boiled crime adventure and radio drama seem made for each other. Perhaps it was because of the importance of first-person narration for both, perhaps it was the presence of so many gritty-voiced leading men around the radio studios just waiting to be cast as intrepid gumshoes, or perhaps it was just 'the need of so many post-war white-collar workers leading hum-drum office lives to imagine what it must be like to be a bold anti-hero. But whatever the factors, radio and the hard-boiled detective go together like gin and tonic, like Smith and Wesson, and most of all, like Howard Duff and Sam Spade.

William Spier entered broadcasting via the print media. He had been a rising music critic on the staff of *Musical America*, a distinguished publication serving the symphonic and operatic communities, when he was approached to take over the production duties for the *Atwater Kent Hour*, one of the leading radio showcases for classical and semi-classical music during the early years of network broadcasting. He soon found that he enjoyed radio more than print, and soon joined the full-time production staff at CBS. It was there that he got to know many of the professionals who would help shape his career, from actors like Orson Welles and Agnes Moorehead, to composers like Bernard Herrmann,



writers like Lucille Fletcher, and fellow directors like John Dietz. By the turn of the forties, he had risen to head the network's program development office, where his most distinguished accomplishment, in 1942, was the inauguration of Radio's Outstanding Theatre of Thrills, *Suspense*. Spier headed *Suspense* for its first five years on the air, establishing the format and the high standards of production that would mark the program for its entire twenty-year run. By the time he was ready for something new, the West Coast was already littered with private-eye shows—something about California seemed to breed the idea of chain-smoking, hat-wearing, prose-spouting rebels with a gun. Dashiell Hammett was already enjoying the weekly royalty checks emanating from the successful radio version of *The Thin Man*, and the author was in no way averse to seeing further broadcast exploitation of his characters. The result, in the fall of 1946, was the ABC premiere of *The Adventures of Sam Spade*.

Spade wasn't entirely new to the air, of course. He'd turned up in a couple of adapta-

tions of *The Maltese Falcon*, and based on the familiarity of that property, the general outline of the character didn't really need to be established. Listeners already knew that he operated out of a sleazy office in San Francisco, that he had a faithful secretary named Effie



Lurene Tuttle

Perrine, and that he was often at odds with Sgt. Polhaus and Lt. Dundy of the SFPD. Listeners also knew that he could take a beating as well as he could dish one out, and that he wasn't always as clever as he thought he was in dealing with mysterious women. That, in a nutshell, was all you really needed to know about Sam Spade in order to produce a radio series about him.

But William Spier knew one more thing beyond those basics. He knew that radio detectives tended to take themselves a bit too seriously, and a bit of comedy, just a bit of a wink and 'a nudge toward the audience, would not be out of line. It was that ingredient, that sense of, "yeah, we know this is a ridiculous, implausible plot, but stick with us and see how it strings out" that made *The Adventures of Sam Spade* a hit. Spier didn't have to look far to find the ideal actor to play his lead. Howard Duff was already knocking around Hollywood, just released from his Army job at the Armed Forces Radio Service, where he had worked closely with another bright young man named Elliott Lewis. Duff's tough-but-bemused persona was exactly what William Spier wanted. He wasn't Humphrey Bogart—nobody was ever Bogart but the man himself, and sometimes even Bogart himself fell short—but, Duff understood enough

of what Bogart had brought to the role of Spade on screen to subtly satirize it without turning his own portrayal into a crude spoof. That was exactly the approach that Spier wanted. Likewise, veteran actress Lurene Tuttle offered a credible take on Lee Patrick's smart, sympathetic movie portrayal of Effie without slavishly imitating it...and added a unique sense of humor all her own. Spier wanted originals who, at the same time, weren't too far afield from the established portrayals, And, he got them. In *Spades*, if you will.

The Adventures of Sam Spade worked on every level, from the laconic tone of the scripts by such quality radio authors as Robert Tallman, Gil Doud, Jack Neuman, and Harold Swanton to the music and sound work by two of Spier's closest collaborators from *Suspense*, composer Lud Gluskin and soundman Berne Surrey. Even the announcing by the ebullient Dick Joy and the commercials for Wildroot hair products were just exaggerated enough to fit the tone without sliding too far into parody. Rarely had radio ever assembled a more perfect package. Even rival programs acknowledged it as a masterwork. The appearance on a rival network of Dick Powell as *Richard Diamond* not long after *Spade's* success was testimony enough that satire—even of a satire itself—is the sincerest form of flattery.

It was, of course, too good to last. The series skipped from ABC to CBS after one season, and enjoyed a satisfying run there. It had just moved on to NBC when the mood of the times caught up with it. The early 1950's were not a time suitable for free-thinkers in any field, least of all show business, and when the unapologetically left-wing political sympathies of Hammett and Duff came to the attention of those who had appointed themselves watch-

dogs of orthodoxy, Sam Spade was in a predicament that he couldn't fast-talk hrs way out of. Hammett had never made any secret of his politica: views, and his name disappeared immediately from the program. Duff was jettisoned in the fall of 1950 after his name appeared in the vigilante publication "Red Channels" on the basis of his public support for members of the Hollywood Ten. Even with Duff gone and Hammett's name dropped from the credits, the series remained tainted by the gummy stroke of the blacklisters' brush—and lasted only one more unsponsored season in its denatured form, with Steve Dunne in the title role.

The Adventures of Sam Spade receded into legend, re-emerging with the rediscovery of Old Time Radio as a series beloved even by those who have little fondness otherwise fur the hard-boiled genre Jr. building a series that developed such powerful mass appeal—even with only a comparative handful of its episodes available for modern-day listening—William Spier proved once again that he was a true master of the medium. ■

Reprinted from Radio Collectors of America newsletter.



Lawyer Tucker (7 P. m.) Harley Hagenaw, "brains" of the local hoodlum gang, engages "Lawyer Tucker" to represent him in an entirely legitimate deal, but the barrister's association promptly lands him in the doghouse with his fellow citizens. Even the attorney's own family offers strong opposition, but Tucker gets his own way by methods that are surprising and amusing.

Crime Photographer (7:30. p.m.) Naive logic of his Aunt Harriet, leads Lensman Casey to the solution of a baffling murder case. "Find the Papers." Aunty arrives in the big city with the hope of meeting some of her nephew's underworld acquaintances, and insists on helping Casey, Reporter Ann Williams and Captain Logan investigate the death of a recluse.

Man Called X (8:30 p. m.) An international gangster using coffins stolen from ancient Egyptian tombs to hide lend-lease rifles smuggled from Egypt to Mecca, draws Herbert Marshall, as "The Man Called X," halfway around the world to investigate a strange case. "Mr. X," in turn resorts to some secrets of the ancients to smash the pirate ring.

People's Platform (9 p.m.) With Dwight Cooke as chairman, James M. Landis, chairman of the Civil Aeronautics board and former dean of Harvard law school, Louis Hooker, professor of economics at Columbia university, and Edward Rager, New York City councilman and former secretary of the National Republican club, will discuss the question, "Is the presidential veto power in the public interest?"

June 26, 1947

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